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A Journey for a Lifetime

Camp Ramah in California Northern California Initiative

July 2010
Av 5770

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to report that we have moved one step closer to opening a Camp Ramah in Northern California by setting up an independent non-profit organization and appointing our very first Board of Directors.

The tasks of this Board will include identifying an appropriate site for Camp Ramah NorCal, raising the necessary funds and hiring a Camp Director when we are ready. They are also responsible for working together with the existing Camp Ramah in California Board to figure out how the two camps will work together and formalizing the governance and business relationship. The professional staff in Southern California will continue to provide both leadership and expertise as this project moves forward.

We are grateful to the leaders of the now-defunct Camp Ramah Day Camp for so graciously allowing us to repurpose their non-profit organization, saving us both time and money.

Our volunteer Site Scout crew and Site Advisory team are working together with our broker to identify appropriate potential campsites. If you have real estate development experience or like to drive on windy country roads and would like to help imagine the next Camp Ramah, please hit your reply button.

Some of our best site leads have come from members of the community. We are looking for 100-200 acres within a 90 minute drive of the San Francisco airport. If you know of someone looking to sell their camp, resort, or retreat center, be sure to let us know!



Rabbi Laurie Matzkin of Palo Alto's Congregation Kol Emeth at Camp Ramah in Ojai last week

Meet the Board

Gary Ball, Alex Bernstein, Ed Epstein, Mark Lieberman, Jay Reisbaum, Loren Shalinsky and Anne Steirman have stepped forward to serve on the first Board of Camp Ramah in Northern California. They bring a wide range of experience in both non-profit and business leadership. They share a commitment to bring the Ramah experience to Northern California. Please allow me to introduce them to you:

Gary Ball is a management and technology consultant in the South Bay area. After an active career as a research scientist, inventor and entrepreneur, Gary changed directions to spend more time with his family. Gary has taught Physical Science as a public school teacher and has served the South Bay community through leadership roles on the Boards of the Jewish Community Center, Yavneh Day School and Congregation Beth David. Gary is currently serving on the Boards of the Children's Musical Theater San Jose and Camp Ramah in California. His hobbies include photography and videography. Gary is married with a 14-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter, both Ramah campers.

Alex Bernstein is a strategic and financial advisor to small/upstart cleantech companies and an avid investor in creative business ideas. He spent 18 years working for boutique investment banks doing public offerings, private placements and mergers/acquisitions for companies around the globe, but primarily in the United States and in Israel. Alex is the Chairman of the Camp Ramah in California Endowment Committee and an active volunteer at his children's schools, especially when he can get involved in budget and/or science education issues. Alex and his wife, Sonia, have been attending family camp at Ramah for six straight years and two of their three children attend Ramah in the summer. He attended a variety of Jewish camps on the East Coast growing up. Alex enjoys running, traveling, computing and making fun of Facebook devotees.

Edwin Epstein is a professor emeritus of International and Area Studies and the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley where he also directed the Rotary Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution and chaired the Academic Senate. He is the former Dean of the School of Economics and Business Administration at St. Mary's College of California. His non-profit board experience includes serving as President of Berkeley Hillel and the Northern California Jewish Bulletin (now J. Jewish News Weekly), Vice President of the Judah Magnes Museum and the Jewish Federation of the East Bay, and member of the Board of Lehrhaus Judaica. He has been married for 50 years to his wife Sandra Epstein, the former Chief Operating Officer of the Jewish Home in San Francisco. He was born in Philadelphia, educated at the University of Pennsylvania, Yale Law School and the University of California, Berkeley.

Mark Lieberman has an MSEE, earned long enough ago that the information learned would be useless today -- even if he could remember any of it. That applies also to the text book he co-authored. In 1969 he became a broker and served as a portfolio manager and investment adviser. His third career is "retirement," which affords time to spend with friends, some of whom are well. He was a Camp Ramah Wisconsin camper in its first year of being - 1947. His wife, Adele, is a former Hebrew school principal, and was active in Camp Arazim, where their two daughters happily attended for

several years.

Jay Reisbaum serves as Ramah NorCal Board Chair. He began his love for all things Ramah in the summer of '75 at age 11. Jay attended Ramah CA as a camper, staff member and division head until he finished UCLA in 1986. Jay met his wife Tara at camp and she worked in and later ran the Tikvah special needs program. Jay and Tara raised their 3 children spending each summer at camp. Jay joined the Ramah CA board in 1993 managing the alumni and later the real estate areas and he became board chair from 2002 through 2005. As board chair Jay was placed on the National Ramah Commission which oversees Ramah nationally. Jay remains on the NRC and the Ramah CA executive committees. In his day job Jay is Senior Vice President of Laemmle Theatres, a family owned and operated art, foreign and independent movie theater chain in the Los Angeles area.

Loren Shalinsky is a market analyst and strategic planning professional. He has worked in the marketing field for high technology companies for the last 17 years. When stepping away from the office, Loren has performed many roles in the community, including chairing the Planning and Agency Services committee for the South Peninsula Council of the Jewish Community Federation, serving as Vice President of the Young Adults Division of the SFJCF, being a member of his synagogue board, tutoring 2nd graders as a Jewish Coalition for Literacy tutor, as well as 10 years of being a youth group advisor for kids ranging from ages 8 to 18. Loren possesses a love for immersive Jewish experiences, as he has many years of attending and working at overnight camps (Camp Herzl in Wisconsin and Camp Young Judaea in Texas, if you must know) and 2 1/2 years of living and working in Israel. Loren and his wife Robyn are trying to instill a love of Judaism to their 2 sons, while trying to figure out how much time they will save by having both kids at the same school.

Anne Steirman is an active community volunteer and parent. She has served on a variety of boards and committees within the Jewish community, including board positions with the Jewish Community Federation, the North Peninsula Jewish Community Day School (now the Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School), and the Peninsula Jewish Community Center. In addition to volunteer work in the Jewish community, Anne has also been involved with My New Red Shoes, Women's Recovery Association, the Peninsula Humane Society, and the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. Anne was born and raised in Los Angeles, where she had the good fortune to be able to attend Camp Ramah on numerous occasions. Before having children, she worked for a public policy research firm, evaluating government-funded programs. Along with her husband, David, Anne's main occupation is raising their ten-year-old daughter, Emily, and seven-year-old son, Evan, both students at the Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School. Emily has followed Anne's footsteps by spending parts of her summer at Camp Ramah in California.



Our current focus is on the search for a site.

We are committed to finding a site that will meet our needs for at least the next 50 years. We'll continue to keep you posted.

With best wishes,
ellen bob

Director of Community Development in Northern California
Camp Ramah in California

You can always reach me by email, ellenbob@gmail.com, or call me at 650-867-8048



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